



Volume 29  
Issue 1 March - Symposium on Native American  
Wellness

Article 12

March 2002

*Review of Social Work Practice with Immigrants and Refugees.*

Pallassana, R. Balgopal (Ed.). Review by Frederick L. Ahearn, Jr.

Frederick L. Ahearn Jr.  
*Catholic University of America*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw>



Part of the Social Work Commons

### Recommended Citation

Ahearn, Frederick L. Jr. (2002) "Review of *Social Work Practice with Immigrants and Refugees*.  
Pallassana, R. Balgopal (Ed.). Review by Frederick L. Ahearn, Jr.," *The Journal of Sociology & Social  
Welfare*: Vol. 29 : Iss. 1 , Article 12.  
Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol29/iss1/12>

This Book Review is brought to you by the Western  
Michigan University School of Social Work. For more  
information, please contact [wmu-  
scholarworks@wmich.edu](mailto:wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu).



the elderly (Duff, Robert W. and Hong, Lawrence, „Age Density, Religiosity and Death Anxiety in Retirement Communities”) or a re-translation of critical words from Weber’s “Class, Status, Party” (Abel, Thomas and Cockerham, William C., “Lifestyle of Lebensführung?”), the articles only provide fragmentary evidence for Mouzelis’ assertion and not a needed coherent illustration of proof.

Shana Cohen  
George Washington University

Pallassana, R. Balgopal (Ed.). *Social Work Practice with Immigrants and Refugees*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000. \$49.50 hardcover, \$21.00 papercover.

In the past decade, we have seen a dramatic increase of immigrants and refugees settling in the United States. The latest census data reveal that 9.5% of the population (25.9 million individuals) were born in another country compared to 8.0% in 1990. Many of these persons have fled wars in the native lands, arrived here in a desperate search for work, or have come to be reunited with families members. Compared to previous migrations, the editor points out in his introductory chapter that “immigrants represent greater diversity with regard to country of origin, race and ethnicity, spoken language, and, often, different value systems.” Too, I would hasten to add, they present many of the same challenges that social workers faced in another era, working in settlement houses. Housing, jobs and job training, language classes, schooling for the children are usually the first line of required services while social support, income maintenance, health care, and on occasion, mental health assistance are needed as well. Social workers in most major cities in the country are facing the increasing problems and needs of these new-comers. This book, *Social Work Practice with Immigrants and Refugees*, examines and develops roles that social workers may play in assisting this population.

The reader is presented with an excellent introduction that contributes to an understanding of immigrants, refugees, and illegal aliens within the context of yesterday and today’s world. The notions of the “melting pot,” assimilation, the ugly tide of xenophobia, and cultural pluralism are explored under the rubric

of ecological theory. Also, the authors refer to and discuss the rich history of social work's involvement in serving immigrants and refugees in the past and draw appropriate recommendations for social work intervention today.

Other chapters attend to social work practice with recent arrivals from Asia, Central and South America, Africa and the Caribbean, and Europe. One learns of the historical patterns of migration, problems faced by the migrants, and U. S. laws and policies that influenced resettlement of each of these immigrant groups. Case examples highlight the ways in which social workers assist and support immigrant and refugee families. Specific suggestions are offered for doing assessments and dealing with such issues as health needs, substance abuse, and HIV/AIDS.

We are presented with a profile of individuals and families who have relocated to the United States since 1990. We learn of their demographics, how they maintain contact with their countries of origin, and how current immigration policy influence positively and negatively their adjustment. Valuable information is offered about programs for cash and medical assistance, employment services, and preventive health services for immigrants and refugees. In a concluding chapter, the editor of this volume states that "the role of the social worker is to learn how to assess immigrants' situations, advocate for their rights and needs, determine which community resources they need . . ."

It is a fact that globalization and regional conflicts have produced considerable forced and economic migration to the United States that has resulted in individual and family upheaval. Their problems, needs, and issues in adjustment strongly call for social work intervention at both the micro and macro levels. The authors of this book have added greatly to our knowledge on this subject. Social work faculty, responsible for classes in human behavior and the social environment, diversity, and practice, will find this book an informative and useful text for their students. Finally, social work practitioners will encounter in these chapters an excellent reference for practice with immigrants and refugees.

Frederick L. Ahearn, Jr.  
Catholic University of America